Vulnerability of East Coast of Tamil Nadu

679. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state.

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that the East Coast of Tamil Nadu has become vulnerable to the Defence of India due to: (i) its long coast, (ii) innumerable fishing boats going into the Sea, (iii) fishermen conniving with the smugglers and terrorists to smuggle weapons and petroleum products out of India, (iv) the sophisticated weapons and Vessels used by the terrorists from the neighbouring Island country, and (v) the inadequate and luke warm steps taken by the erstwhile D.M.K. Government to arrest the inflow of terrorists though its Coasts;

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to protect and defend the country;

(c) what vigilance steps are in force to arrest and contain the daily insurgency of terrorists through this vulnerable coast into Tamil Nadu; and

(d) whether Government propose to deploy a heavy column of Coastal guards with sophisticated weapons and boats to put an end to the inflow of terrorists and their allied activities?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) The Government are maintaining a close watch over all developments which have a bearing on national security for taking effective measures to safeguard national security interests at all times. Due attention has also been given by the Govt. to the requirements of the Tamil Nadu Coast.

The Indian Navy and Coast Guard are maintaining intensive surveillance/patrolling in the Palk Bay/Palk Straits. For this purpose, their resources have been augmented and 2 Naval Detachments, one each at Rameshwaram and Nagapattinam, have been set up. A special drive recently launched by the Tamil Nadu Government has resulted in the seizure of sizeable quantities of arms, ammunition etc. and arrest of a number of militants.

Defence spending

680. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to reduce the present level of defence spending;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, whether Government are aware that I.M.F. may favour a cut in Military spending as a conditionality in assisting the developing countries as per the news item appearing in the Business Times (Times of India) dated June 27, 1991; and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to review their policy on defence spending in the light thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) As reflected in the General Budget 1991-92, there is a provision of Rs. 16,350 crores for Defence Services as against an allocation of Rs. 15,750 crores in Reivsed Estimates 1990-91.

Government takes into account all relevant considerations, including effective defence preparedness, while deciding on the allocations for the various sectors.

681. *(Transferred to 2nd August, 1991)*

Modernisation of army in context of Gulf war

682. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governmnet are taking adequate steps to modernize the Army with the latest developed weapons with the experience of most modern and precise weapons used by the U.S. Government and their allies during the Gulf War; and

(b) whether the Pakistan Government has already acquired such ultramodern and precise weapons as used during the Gulf War?